United Nations S/2004/632

Security Council

Distr.: General
10 August 2004
English
Original: French

Letter dated 9 August 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you, herewith, the text of the address to the nation delivered by the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, His Excellency Mr. Laurent Gbagbo, on 6 August 2004, on the occasion of the national holiday (see annex).

I should be grateful if you could arrange to have this letter and its annex circulated as documents of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Philippe D. **Djangoné-Bi**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

04-45557 (E) 130804 130804

Annex to the letter dated 9 August 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Ladies and Gentlemen of Côte d'Ivoire,

My dear fellow citizens,

Dear friends of Côte d'Ivoire,

Tomorrow, our country, Côte d'Ivoire, is celebrating the forty-fourth anniversary of its independence. For the second consecutive year, the national holiday is taking place in a context of crisis. However, with each successive year, we are gaining confidence in ourselves and in our ability to safeguard the sovereignty of our country and our people.

Only a people that has faced great challenges can achieve greatness in history. This is a constant factor in the life of nations. The present crisis is therefore a defining ordeal, a rite of passage, which will only serve to strengthen the Ivorian people.

Tonight, on the eve of the commemoration of our accession to international sovereignty, I should like to express, on behalf of myself and all Ivorians, the Ivorian nation's appreciation to the international community for its ongoing assistance to enable Côte d'Ivoire to regain peace and the road to prosperity.

We gratefully recognize the international community's immeasurable contribution; as a result of its actions, the Ivorian parties were able to hold meetings in Lomé, Linas-Marcoussis and Accra. I should particularly like to extend my gratitude to all the international actors of the peace process:

- The United Nations and its Secretary-General, Kofi Annan;
- The Economic Community of West African States and its Chairman, my friend John Kufuor;
- The African Union, its Chairperson Olusegun Obasanjo, and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Alpha Oumar Konare;
- France, the European Union, the United States of America and Canada.

My dear fellow citizens,

We are moving forward! We are moving forward! We are on an inexorable march towards the end of the crisis. Together with the countries of the subregion, friendly nations and the entire international community, we are eliminating the final barriers, the final concerns and the final suspicions, so that we may regain each other's confidence and earn the confidence and assistance of all our foreign partners. That is the reason why I have taken the initiative of contacting everyone inside our country and in Africa.

My travels have taken me to Addis Ababa, Rabat, Bamako, Libreville, Brazzaville and Accra. This tour is not yet finished, which is why I have not yet talked about it. I wish to speak to the citizens of Côte d'Ivoire clearly and without ambiguity. I ask you to give me time to finish the tour I have decided to undertake before I talk about the ground covered, about the results of the various negotiations, particularly the agreement signed at the end of the Accra meeting held on 29-30 July

2004, with the participation of several African Heads of State and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

We intend to implement this agreement, which is currently the subject of much discussion. I often listen to the comments with considerable amusement. However, it is not yet time for me to speak. I shall wait until the clamour has died down and I have completed the course, namely when we have put a definitive end to the war.

We shall no longer speak of hope but of a war that has ended. We shall point out the paths of renewal.

For the time being, I ask everyone to read just the text of the agreement signed at Accra. As in the past, we are the ones who have the solution. The Ivorians must realize that they hold the solution in their own hands.

I should like to remind everyone sent to Côte d'Ivoire, regardless of their level of responsibility, whether they are sent for the settlement of the crisis or simply to follow up decisions we have taken, that their mission is to help us. They must do their work, which is to help us, and avoid throwing oil on the fire by making intemperate remarks to the national media. Such actions are intolerable and will not be tolerated.

The situation is still delicate and we must all be careful. I am counting on everyone to show a sense of responsibility. I ask the Ivorians to remain calm.

My dear fellow citizens,

Dear friends of Côte d'Ivoire,

How can I thank those who are helping us without paying tribute to the Ivorians themselves? I thank them not only for their perseverance in resistance but also for their everyday efforts, which are enabling Côte d'Ivoire to remain standing and to keep the foundations of its national economy intact, in spite of the war and the suffering.

The national economy is functioning relatively well, notwithstanding a particularly unfavourable climate. The credit goes to the national and foreign economic actors who continue to have confidence in our country.

The difficulties caused by the war are well known; they are lack of security, particularly in the zones controlled by the rebels, and obstructions to the movement of goods and people; the fall in the price of raw materials, loss of confidence in market development; and a lack of foreign financial aid. To put an end to this state of affairs, we must make every effort to reunify our country and to achieve peace and national reconciliation.

We owe as much to our young people and to future generations. For that reason, I wish to congratulate all actors of the school system; for quite some time, their work has enabled Côte d'Ivoire to experience a relatively normal school year, where that is possible. I have had the pleasure of participating in and supporting a number of prize-giving ceremonies.

We have clearly proven that, in spite of great difficulties, we still strive for excellence. Education is the only hope for our youth and for our nation.

In this stage of our development, the responsibility of the political class, of any political class, is considerable. I am counting on each one of you to keep the hope of our youth alive.

God bless Côte d'Ivoire!

Laurent Gbagbo
President of the Republic